



## Social Media Policy

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CONTENT	PAGE
<b>Social Media Policy</b>	
Aims	3
Policy Scope	3
Responsibilities	3
Social Media Content	3
General Social Media Guidelines for College Accounts	4
College Account Use	4
Responsible Social Media Use	5
Security & Data Protection	5
Policy Enforcement	5
<b>APPENDICES</b>	

## 1. Aims

This policy describes the rules of social media use at Uppingham Community College. It sets out the acceptable conduct from staff when using the school's social media accounts.

Social media can bring significant benefits to the college, particularly for building relationships with current and prospective students and parents.

However, it is important that staff that use social media within the school do so in a way which enhances the school's prospects.

A misjudged status update can generate complaints or damage the school's reputation. There are also security and data protection issues to consider.

This policy explains how staff can use social media effectively and safely.

## 2. Policy Scope

This policy applies to all employees, contractors and volunteers who use social media whilst at work – whether for business or personal use.

It applies no matter whether that social media activity takes place on school premises, while on trips or activities or while working at home.

## 3. Responsibilities

Everyone who operates a school social media account or who uses their personal social media accounts at work has some responsibility for implementing this policy.

However, these people have key responsibilities:

- The Principal is ultimately responsible for ensuring that everyone uses social media safely, appropriately and in-line with the school's objectives
- Helen O'Brien is currently responsible for the main account for Facebook, Twitter and Instagram

## 4. Social Media Content

Content typically to be shared on social media:

- School events
- Articles
- Press releases
- School announcements
- Communication sent home

The tone in which you deliver the schools' content on social media should be:

- Light hearted wherever possible
- Professional
- Dependent on content

## 5. General Social Media Guidelines for College Accounts

Regardless of which social networks staff are using, these guidelines should be followed at all times:

- **Know the social network** – spend time becoming familiar with the social network before contributing. It is important to understand what is and is not acceptable on a social media channel before posting anything
- **If unsure, don't post it** – staff should err on the side of caution when posting updates to social networks and if they feel that an update could cause offense or complaints, they should not post it, and should consult the Principal
- **Be careful with regards to students** – consult the student profile information on Bromcom if unsure of the use of certain student images and you should not include student surnames
- **Keep a positive tone** – many social media users have gotten into trouble by simply failing to observe basic good manners online. Always adopt a pleasant tone when communicating online
- **Look out for security threats** – be on guard for social engineering and phishing attempts. Social networks can also be sued for spam distribution and malware
- **Don't make promises without checking** – some social networks are very public so employees should not make any commitments or promises on behalf of the college without checking first
- **Don't escalate things** – it's easy to post a quick response to a contentious status update or query and then regret it. Employees should take the time to think before responding, and hold back if at all in doubt

## 6. College Account Use

### Authorised Users

Only people who have been authorised to use the school's social networking accounts may do so.

Authorisation is provided by the Principal.

Allowing only designated people to use the accounts ensures the school's social media presence is consistent and in-line with guidelines.

### Creating Social Media Accounts

New social media accounts for subject use may be created in accordance with the guidelines set out within this policy, once approved by the Principal.

### Inappropriate Content and Use

College social media accounts must not be used to share or spread inappropriate content, or to take part in any activities that could bring Uppingham Community College into disrepute.

## 7. Responsible Social Media Use

Users must not:

- Create and distribute material that might be defamatory or incur liability for the school
- Post messages, status updates or links to material or content that is inappropriate
- Use social media for any illegal or criminal activities
- Broadcast their own views on social, political, religious or other non-school related matters
- Send offensive or harassing messages to others via social media
- Send or post messages that could damage the reputation or image of the college
- Discuss colleagues, competitors, students or parents without their approval
- Cause any conflict of interest, employees must ensure that personal social networking sites are set to private and students are never listed as approved contacts. An exception to this may be if the child is the employee's own child, relative, or family friend.

## 8. Security and Data Protection

Users should **maintain confidentiality** and must **not**:

- Share or link to any content or information owned by the school that could be considered confidential or commercially sensitive
- Share or link to any content or information owned by another school or person that could be considered confidential or commercially sensitive
- Share or link to data in any way that could breach the school's data protection policy

## 9. Social Media Account Protection

Uppingham Community College social media accounts should be protected by strong passwords that are changed regularly, stored in a spreadsheet known to all involved parties, and shared only with authorised users

## 10. Policy Enforcement

Knowingly breaching the social media policy of Uppingham Community College is a serious matter. Users who do so will be subject to disciplinary action and in serious cases may be treated as gross misconduct, which itself could lead to dismissal.

Employees, contractors and other users of the college social media may also be held personally liable for violating this policy.